

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 000847

SIPDIS

STATE PASS USAID/ANNE CONVERY
BELGRADE FOR MSALVETTI
BUDAPEST FOR KPOSNER-MULLEN
LJUBLJANA FOR SGONZALEZ
SARAJEVO FOR MBOYNTON

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SENV](#) [FAID](#) [ECIN](#) [EWWT](#) [PREL](#) [HR](#)
SUBJECT: PERMANENT SAVA COMMISSION HAS CROATIAN SUPPORT BUT
NEEDS CHAMPION

REF: STATE 90991

11. (U) THE FOLLOWING RESPONDS TO REFTEL QUESTIONS ON THE STATUS OF THE SAVA RIVER BASIN INITIATIVE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT COMMISSION IN ZAGREB.

SUMMARY

12. ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT SAVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION WITH A SECRETARIAT IN ZAGREB HAS BROAD SUPPORT AT THE WORKING LEVEL. SHIFTING PERSONNEL IN THE SENIOR LEVELS OF THE GOC, COMBINED WITH A COMPLICATED DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSIBILITIES AMONG THREE MINISTRIES, HAVE PRECLUDED A STRONG STATEMENT OF POLITICAL SUPPORT FOR THE INITIATIVE SINCE THE HDZ-LED GOVERNMENT CAME TO POWER EARLIER THIS YEAR. WHILE THE GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS ITS SUPPORT FOR THE SECRETARIAT'S LOCATION IN ZAGREB, THE PERMANENT COMMISSION

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HAS EFFECTIVELY BEEN PUT ON HOLD PENDING RATIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT BY SERBIA AND MONTENEGRO. END SUMMARY.

PERMANENT SECRETARIAT IN ZAGREB IS "ALREADY SETTLED"...

13. IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL, WE SPOKE WITH KARMEN CERAR, SENIOR ADVISOR IN THE DIRECTORATE OF WATER MANAGEMENT, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, AND WATER MANAGEMENT; NEVEN GRUBISIC, ADVISOR IN THE MINISTRY OF MARITIME AFFAIRS, TOURISM, TRANSPORT, AND DEVELOPMENT; SPOMENKA CEK, NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR THE STABILITY PACT IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS; AND MELITA ZIZANOVIC-DAKIC, LEGAL ADVISOR IN THE MFA, TO ASSESS PROGRESS TOWARDS ESTABLISHING A PERMANENT SAVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION. ALL FOUR CONFIRMED CROATIA'S RESOLVE TO WORK WITH NEIGHBORING RIPARIAN STATES TO ESTABLISH A PERMANENT SAVA RIVER BASIN COMMISSION.

14. CERAR CONFIRMED GOC SUPPORT FOR ZAGREB AS THE SECRETARIAT'S LOCATION, ADDING THAT A PHYSICAL LOCATION ON

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PANTOVCAK STREET HAS ALREADY BEEN SELECTED; HOWEVER, SHE CAUTIONED THAT CROATIAN ENTHUSIASM FOR THE PERMANENT COMMISSION COULD NOT PROCEED WITHOUT SAM RATIFICATION OF THE IFA. MOREOVER, CERAR NOTED THAT A DIPLOMATIC NOTE CONFIRMING CROATIA'S SUPPORT WAS UNNECESSARY, AS THE GOC'S RATIFICATION OF THE IFA FULLY DEMONSTRATED THE NECESSARY POLITICAL WILL TO PROCEED. GRUBISIC SAID THAT THE QUESTION OF THE SECRETARIAT'S LOCATION WAS ABOVE ALL LEGAL AND THAT THE MFA WAS FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR QUESTIONS PERTAINING TO THE PERMANENT COMMISSION'S STATUS. CEK AFFIRMED MFA'S READINESS TO PROCEED WITH THE PERMANENT COMMISSION AND EVEN ANNOUNCED THAT OFFICE SPACE FOR TEN HAD BEEN PREPARED. ZIZANOVIC-DAKIC AT THE MFA CONFIRMED THAT THE ISSUE OF THE SECRETARIAT'S LOCATION IN ZAGREB WAS "ALREADY SETTLED."

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...LESS SO THE DIVISION OF LABOR

14. AUTHORITY FOR OVERSEEING THE SAVA RIVER BASIN INITIATIVE IS CURRENTLY DIVIDED AMONG THE MINISTRIES OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AGRICULTURE AND MARITIME AFFAIRS. MFA HAS THUS FAR PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON THE LEGAL ASPECT, INCLUDING THE DRAFTING OF THE FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT. MFA WILL RETAIN LEAD AUTHORITY ON THE INITIATIVE UNTIL SAM RATIFICATION IS COMPLETED. WORKING LEVEL RESPONSIBILITY IS DIVIDED BY AREA OF TECHNICAL COMPETENCE: WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT, FLOOD CONTROL, AND WATER QUALITY ARE HANDLED THROUGH THE DIRECTORATE FOR WATER MANAGEMENT WITHIN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE WHILE NAVIGATION AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES ARE HANDLED THROUGH THE MARITIME MINISTRY. A/M FOR TRANSPORTATION ANDRIJA BEDNJICKI (MARITIME MINISTRY) AND DEPUTY COMMISSION MEMBER ZELJKO OSTOJIC (AGRICULTURE

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IATIVE AND THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF A PERMANENT COMMISSION IN ZAGREB.

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SECRETARIAT LOCATED IN ZAGREB IS STRONG AT THE WORKING LEVEL, CHANGES IN TOP-LEVEL PERSONNEL AND MINISTRY RESTRUCTURING HAS LEFT THE INITIATIVE IN THE HANDS OF TECHNOCRATS WITHOUT A CLEAR POLITICAL CHAMPION. THOUGH THE MFA STRESSED THAT THE PROJECT BELONGED IN THE HANDS OF EXPERTS KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS, IT'S UNCLEAR TO WHAT EXTENT BEDNJICKI AND OSTOJIC WILL BE ABLE TO COMMIT GOC RESOURCES WITHOUT STRONG POLITICAL SUPPORT. WHILE SAM'S DELAY IN RATIFYING THE IFA HAS CERTAINLY CONTRIBUTED TO SLOW PROGRESS, A LACK OF CONTINUITY (BOTH IN PERSONNEL AT THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL AND IN COMPETENCES AMONG THE INVOLVED MINISTRIES) HAS PRECIPITATED SOME CONFUSION AND DELEGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY DOWN THE RANKS.

16. SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE LETTER OF INTENT BY THE THEN MARITIME MINISTER IN NOVEMBER 2001, THE GOVERNMENT HAS CHANGED AND THE MINISTRY HAS BEEN BROADENED TO INCLUDE TOURISM AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT. THE CURRENT MINISTER,

BOZIDAR KALMETA, HAS FOCUSED LATELY MORE ON THESE PORTFOLIOS THAN STRICTLY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES. WHILE THE HARD-CHARGING KALMETA IS THE OBVIOUS CHOICE TO INVIGORATE THE INITIATIVE WITH HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL SUPPORT, WORKING LEVEL CONTACTS QUESTIONED EVEN HIS AWARENESS OF IT. AS LONG AS RATIFICATION REMAINS PENDING, HIGHER LEVELS IN THE MFA AND MARITIME MINISTRY CAN SAFELY ALLOW THE INITIATIVE TO PROCEED AT THE WORKING LEVEL. ONCE RATIFICATION HAS BEEN COMPLETED, WE WILL MONITOR PROGRESS TO DETERMINE IF

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